

docyard



Press Kit



Short Documentary (25 min)

www.touchdown-movie.ch

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Logline

The short documentary follows the Winterthur Warriors Ladies, a recently founded American Football team for women, through their early roller-coaster development.

Synopsis

Short

Ready, set, hut! In picturesque Switzerland, the Winterthur Warriors Ladies, an American Football Team for women, gets formed with a proper share of pioneering spirit, again and again encountering various challenges.

Medium

The recently founded Winterthur Warriors Ladies launch their mission with a lot of enthusiasm, optimism and a proper share of pioneering spirit: To establish their team and American football in Switzerland for women. An absolute rarity in the picturesque, conservative Alpine country.

But again and again, the team encounters obstacles and challenges that threaten its further development...

(Very) Long

In September 2018, former Offensive Liner Patrick Feller founds an American football team for women: The Winterthur Warriors Ladies. The team's vision: To establish its fascinating, physically tough and strategically complex sport in Switzerland for women in the long term.

Until then, however, the diverse team has a long way to go: Despite fluctuations the team must be held together; the recruitment and long-term retention of new team members is an ongoing issue. Injuries which are part and parcel of this 'collision sport' also set the team back again and again. Nevertheless, the ladies are optimistic and envision a shiny (female) future for their sport.

After a very promising initial phase, however, a central goal conflict becomes increasingly apparent: While for some of the ladies it is enough to indulge in their hobby by throwing a few balls once a week for fun, the coaches consider a high level of commitment to the sport as indispensable in order to achieve the ambitious goals they have set for the team. This willingness to subordinate other leisure activities to football – like the coaches handled it in their own active careers as football players – is something they see in only a few team members, however.

In the course of the team's development, Head Coach Feller increasingly despairs of the gap between his demands and the reality of an amateur sport. His dogged determination and the non-chalant attitude of some of the team members drift further and further apart. This leads to increasing friction that manifests itself primarily in the head coach's inner 'torment'. And thus threatens the further team development...

Protagonists

Patrick 'Coach' Feller, 39, Head Coach, Team Founder & Bad Cop

Patrick is the initiator of the project: After his 10-year-career as an Offensive Liner, he wanted to start something new: An American Football Ladies' Team!

But his love for the sport is also his achilles' heel: When the ladies don't give the expected effort and the 'carrot and stick'-approach does not work anymore, Patrick's inner conflict and desperation gets obvious...



"Carrot and stick. If you do as I say you'll have an easy life. If not, there will be consequences. That actually is my coaching style."

"Push, push, push, push!"

"For me, there's 0 or 1. Black or White. Touchdown, no touchdown."

"It's still a long way to go, no doubt."

Océane 'Ocean' Bayle, 23, Wide Receiver, Energy Bundle & 'Player'

Ocean stands out with her energetic nature and her fearless attitude: She throws herself into tackles like there's no tomorrow and celebrates and enjoys every success. Even a concussion can't stop her for long.

Her athletic prowess, however, is offset by her notorious unreliability. A character trait that doesn't fit too well with Coach Feller's attitude regarding the subject...



"We always hear the dumbest lines: 'Ah, you're cheerleaders?', 'Oh, you're carrying your boyfriend's bag?' No, I play Football myself!"

"Especially when you had a shitty day you can let out all the frustration of the day. Afterwards, you'll feel better anyway."

"For me, Football has become my medicine."

Andrea 'The Rock' Erni-Brünger, 30, Nose Tackle, Teacher & Lady Lady (not)

If you ask for power, ask for Andrea. She might be a very considerate and likeable person, especially when working with her kids at school. But you don't want to stand in her way playing Football.

Andrea is one of the older teammates and brings a good deal of equanimity and confidence to the table. And a lot of commitment, giving Football a high priority in her life.



"And I'm just not that typical 'Lady Lady'. I was always a little heavier but also a little bit rougher and tougher."

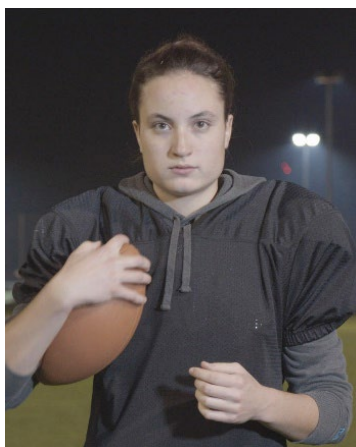
"You need a certain aggressiveness. And this power, too."

"That I – as a Nose Tackle – can pressure them and keep two to three opponents busy at the same time. And then they have to see how they can handle me. That's really fun."

Claudia 'QB' Lütolf, 20, Quarter Back & Ice Woman

Playing Quarterback, Claudia is the strategic epicenter of the team. Her main aim as a QB is to stay calm at all times, even if a whole bunch of defensive players is trying to get (to) her.

Claudia is fascinated by the mixture of physical intensity (“full contact!”) and the mental complexity of the sports and the specific mindset you have to bring into it.



“I couldn't imagine that I, as a women – or back then as a 13-year old girl – could play football.”

“Ready, set, hut!”

“I mean, I also like to watch soccer. But the ref whistles at the slightest little thing... Plus, you do not only play with your body, it's also a mental game. Tactics, coaching is very important. What makes it really interesting.”

Pary 'Chess in Action' Nuri, 17, Center & Diversity Deputy

Pary appreciates the tolerant attitude in the team and that you don't need to have a model figure, that every body type is needed in this sport.

To her, it is particularly important to counteract the image as a 'bull dyke' sport and to prove the people wrong that think of Football as a strictly 'male' sport.



“It's like chess, but in action!”

“Because things have really changed, and no matter what sport I do or what style I have does not make me less of a woman”

“From a lot of women I get really positive feedback. And many men belittle it a little bit.”

“I'm not less of a woman just because I play Football.”

Oliver 'Baggi' Baggenstoos, 34, Defense Coach, Football Expert & Good Cop

'Baggi' is not only the defensive coordinator but also the good soul of the team. Not only an expert in his area but also a really fun guy. And he never misses the post-practice visit at the pub.

Where Coach Feller has to take action Baggi lightens the mood with a cheeky remark. If you don't have a laugh with him you should check your pulse.



“The banter, that during a tough practice you can laugh. And you should laugh. Because it should be fun for everyone.”

“The biggest challenge was that we got a completely new team. That had not much of a clue about the sport. So, when we explained things we noticed the huge question marks on their faces. That they just didn't know what you're talking about.”

Subjects

The Ladies

The team lives from its diversity of people, characters and body shapes: Youthful recklessness meets serene composure. Over-energetic sprinter types mingle with broad, strong women who know how to put their 'beef' into action. Just the explosive mixture of physical intensity, mental attitude and strategic complexity typical for the sport.



Team dynamics and social cohesion are frequently invoked in American football: "Football is Family" is more than just a well-meant bon mot. Our ladies also see themselves as a close-knit community in which everyone is responsible for one another. Everybody has to be able to rely on her teammates.



And our ladies don't care much about being picked on because of their 'male' hobby: They deal offensively with common stereotypes and their identity as women is not threatened by those clichés, at all.

The Challenges

A number of challenges arise in establishing the team. In a strategically complex and male-dominated sport the team must be built from scratch. As there are only 3 ladies' teams in Switzerland, no regular season exists. This obviously clouds the long-term prospects.



Injuries decimate the team. The ladies' willingness for sacrifices varies between the women. Priorities are divided among a wide variety of hobbies and activities. This is a particular problem for the head coach: For him, American football has been a top priority for about 15 years.



At times, he sees the project threatened by failure. A project in which he has invested a lot of his heart and soul.

The Events

After a very promising initial phase, peaking in the first real game against a real opponent, many ladies quit the sport; only the hard core remains.



Further recruitment is slow and without the prospect of regular matches it is difficult to keep up the motivation.

But the coaches and the most committed players keep up their efforts through all the struggles. Still though, in winter, the presence in practice decreases to a large extent, the further prospects seem poor. This hits the head coach particularly hard. But there is new hope in spring when a possibility opens up to play with a team in the German Womens' League.



A hope that immediately gets hit by the onset of the Corona pandemic: A major setback but also an opportunity for a 'great reset'...

Production Notes

We were hyped when we first heard about the Winterthur Warriors Ladies (thanks to the infamous dating app Tinder): Andi is a big American Football fan and Aron instantly liked the aesthetics of the sport. Three enthusiastic text messages from Andi were enough to elicit enthusiastic feedback from Aron ("awesome awesome awesome"). And we both share an interest in non-classical gender subjects where women do something that is thought of as being strictly 'male'. And we were interested in the 'double marginalization' inherent in the subject (marginal sport in Switzerland; women at the margin of that marginal sport). That's why we couldn't pass on this opportunity. Even if it meant starting out without any financing... (but not finishing without any, thanks to our generous crowdfunding supporters, thanks!).



So, we followed the Winterthur Warriors Ladies and their coaches through their roller-coaster development in the early phase of the team's history. The longer we accompanied the team, the clearer it became that the team's struggle is less about dealing with external adversity: The club doesn't really put obstacles in the ladies' way; there's more of an indifferent laissez-faire. And the ladies deal with the stereotyping from outside in a confident and self-assured manner. No, the real challenge lies within, in the conflict of goals between coaches and certain team members in terms of commitment to the project.

While we were initially focused on the subject of gender stereotypes in a classical male sports, the focus changed over time: Challenges, obstacles and conflicting goals became more and more apparent to us, especially represented by the inner conflict of the head coach who struggles with the – in his eyes – lacking commitment of some of the ladies.

This simmering conflict between the (head) coach(es) and the team became our guiding subject in editing the movie and creating the dramatic arc. While in the beginning, everything seems nice and smooth ("paradise"), the central conflict between optimism for a bright future of ladies' football and the reality of everyday practice participation becomes more and more apparent, culminating in the cinematic confrontation of the absolute highlight (first game ever) with the absolute low-point (winter training) of the team's development, ending on a big question mark with the pandemic hitting the world.

Directors



Andi Bänziger, 41, lives in Zurich. He is a late bloomer in the industry: After graduating in sociology, obtaining a PhD in media sciences and working as a researcher and lecturer in various fields, he decided to found a production company with his sister's life partner (and father of his nieces), Aron Marty. As a sociologist, he brings in his experience in social sciences methods. As a producer, he is responsible for any issues concerning financing and distribution. Moreover, he is the factotum for any administrative work nobody else is eager to take over (so basically for all the administrative work).

Filmography (as a co-director)

2022 [Touch Down](#) (short documentary, 25 min)

2020 [Transition – Xbuk Alo?](#) (short documentary, 11 min)

At Manus Barber Shop ("Coiffeur Manu") professionalism encounters fun, young meets old, (Swiss-) German gets mixed up with the semitic languages Tigrinya and Amharic. Always a winning smile on his face and a joke on his lips., Manu is taking care of his customers' curls, beards and dreads



Aron Marty, 40, lives in Zurich. He made kind of a career-changing move, too: After starting out as an offset printer he switched to the audio-visual arts: His graduation at the Zurich University of the Arts in 2014 was the starting point for his career as an independent camera operator and editor for TV, music videos and advertising. For his work in these fields he received a number of awards (music video *Stahlberger Schwizer Film*. Official Selection Filmdays Solothurn; Gold EDI for *Deportation flight KM 491*, Gold bcm for *SIX: Your social media profile*)

In 2019, he started the production company *docyard* (together with producer Andi Bänziger) to focus on the production of documentary movies. His first short documentary *Transition – Xbuk Alo?* (11 min), portraying an Eritrean barber in downtown Zurich, made it into the Official Selection of the Filmdays Solothurn, the biggest festival for Swiss Films.

Filmography (as a co-director)

2022 [Touch Down](#) (short documentary, 25 min)

2021 [suñu ekool](#) (short documentary, 23 min)

After staying in Switzerland for fifteen years, earning a living in construction, 'Bouba' returns to Senegal to help shape the future of his motherland.

2020 [Transition – Xbuk Alo?](#) (short documentary, 11 min)

Technical Information

Completion Date:	January 2022
Duration:	24 min 38 sec
Shooting Location:	Winterthur ZH, Näfels GL, Chur GR (all Switzerland)
Country of Production:	Switzerland
Production Budget:	€19,500
Format:	DCP, Pro Res
Aspect Ratio:	1,90:1 (DCI full)
Resolution:	2048x1080
Sound:	Stereo
Original Languages:	Swiss German
Subtitle Versions:	English, French, German, Spanish